

OF THE

FRANCIS E. WOODRUFF, B. A. (Yale, 1864)

Life Member of the New Jersey Historical Society; New York Historical Society, and Washington Association of New Jersey

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## SKETCHES

- I. Mr. John Gosmer.
- II. John Woodruff, The Immigrant.
- III. The Two Sons John.
- IV. (To follow).
- V. (To follow).

## NOTE

Notes are numbered consecutively, and are referred to by their number instead of being repeated, throughout the three papers.

## ABBREVIATIONS

*Howell.* The Early History of Southampton, L. I.

By George Rogers Howell, M. A. (Yale), *2d Ed.*

*S. T. R.* Records of the Town of Southampton (printed).

*S. T. R. W. S. P.* *Same*, Mr. William S. Pelletreau,  
Introduction.

*S. T. R. Orig.* *Same*. Original records at Southampton.

*E. L. I. W.* Early Long Island Wills of Suffolk County :  
1691-1703, with notes by Wm. S. Pellet-  
reau, A. M.

*Hatfield.* History of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

By Rev. Edwin F. Hatfield, D.D.



I. MR. JOHN GOSMER.





## MR. JOHN GOSMER.

Mr. John Gosmer<sup>1</sup> when "Mr." was reserved for the few, was one of the founders of Southampton, Long Island. His name at first attracted the attention of the writer because he was the step-father (not father-in-law, as we have long believed)<sup>2</sup> of our ancestor John Woodruff the immigrant; but acquaintance with his career quickly made him interesting for himself.

As Howell<sup>3</sup> has told us, he came (as did John Woodruff) from Fordwich, in Kent, England; a quaint little town situated on the right bank of the river Stour (once far-famed for its delicious sea-trout), two or three miles below the city of Canterbury, of which in the long ago it was the port. For now an inland village, in Saxon days it was at the head of a tidal estuary; so the early Kentish kings made it a customs station, whose commercial importance declined as silt made the river less navigable.

It was the "little burgh which is called Forewic," when the Domesday survey was made in the year 1085. Later it became a member of the Cinque Ports' confederacy. Some time between the years 1218 and 1292 it obtained full corporate privileges (a list of its annually-elected mayors, beginning with the latter year, has with much labor

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<sup>1</sup> Goz-mar, Goth-famous; Goose-mere; written Gozmur, Gosmer, Gosmere, Gosmore, Cosmore, Gosman.

<sup>2</sup> In early records the terms "—in—law" or "step—" with father, brother, son, &c., are sometimes omitted; or one is used in the sense of the other.

<sup>3</sup> Howell (see Abbreviations).

been compiled from the existing records); but for centuries its burgesses had to struggle for their rights against the encroachments of their ecclesiastical and other overlords. As the times changed, and Fordwich became a mere hamlet, the governing body gradually outlived its usefulness. Finally, by the Municipal Reforms Act of 1883, it ceased to be "at once the smallest and one of the oldest of the Kentish municipalities."

What the writer has just told about Fordwich, and is to tell about the Gosmer and Woodruff families, he owes to the Reverends A. M. Chichester, R. Hitchcock, and C. E. Woodruff, of Kent; but chiefly to the latter, to whom, for his most valuable history of Fordwich,<sup>4</sup> memorials of the Fordwich Woodruffs,<sup>5</sup> and courteous help, all New Jersey Woodruffs are very deeply indebted.

If we may judge from the records, Mr. Gosmer was the first of his line in Fordwich; but whether he came from some other part of England, or from the Continent, has still to be ascertained. The earliest occurrence of his name that has been found is the signature of John Gozmur as witness to a will (proved in October, 1611) of a John Woodruffe, of the parish of St. Maries of Northgate (adjoining Fordwich),<sup>6</sup> who named in it his wife Elizabeth and young son John, our immigrant ancestor. The times were so stormy that women and children must have protection, and October 24th, 1611, John Gosmore was mar-

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<sup>4</sup> Hist. of the Town and Port of Fordwich, of which a few copies are still obtainable from the author, the Rev. C. Eveleigh Woodruff, M. A., Otterden Rectory, Faversham, Kent (and Editor of the Kent Archæological Society), England.

<sup>5</sup> Memorials of the Family of Woodruff. by the Rev. C. E. Woodruff, M. A., for private distribution, Out of print.

<sup>6</sup> The parishes of Fordwich, St. Mary Northgate, and Sturry, are contiguous.



ried to Elizabeth Woodruffe, widow (both being of the parish of St. Mary, Northgate).<sup>7</sup> He thus became the step-father of our ancestor.

In 1613, John Gosmer, sidesman (churchwarden's assistant), signed (after the vicar and churchwardens) a bill of "Christenings, Marriages, and Burials in the Parish of St. Mary, Northgate." In 1618, John Gosmer, bachelor, joiner, of St. Mary Northgate, married Ann Woodruff, widow.<sup>8</sup> As after much kind research no other Gosmer items prior to this year 1618 have been found in the records, whether Mr. John Gosmer was a widower when he married the widow Elizabeth, and whether he was the father by a first wife of the John Gosmer of 1618, and, as has been suggested, of the Anne who married our ancestor John Woodruff, are matters of conjecture.

In 1637 it is recorded<sup>4</sup> that there was a dispute between the Fordwich Corporation and Mr. Gosmer (as a tenant of the Chapter of Canterbury) regarding the extent of their respective rights over some land; which was referred to arbitration. The result is not known to us, but in 1638 Mr. Gosmer was himself the Mayor of the Corporation.<sup>4</sup> All England was then in the throes of the impending civil war, and, like other ports, Fordwich resisted King Charles' illegal exaction of ship-money. In 1639 the Council in Whitehall demanded from Mr. Gosmer's successor in the mayoralty this unpaid assessment, "which should long since have been paid to the Sheriff of Kent or the Treasurer of the Navy."<sup>4</sup> We know that in 1640 a Mr. Gosmer was in America.

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<sup>7</sup> Register of St. Mary Bredin, Canterbury. Canterbury Marriage Licenses, edited by J. M. Cowper.

<sup>8</sup> Canterbury Marriage Licences, ut. supra.

Efforts made at Sandwich (a port just seaward of Fordwich) and Dover in England, and in the United States have failed to find any record of his emigration. The item may possibly be buried in the unexamined manuscripts of the Public Record Office of England; but Hotten<sup>9</sup> in his Introduction says in effect that only the names of those emigrants were taken who legally left the shores of England; that those who went (as Mr. Gosmer obviously did) to avoid payment of the hated ship money left secretly and that of such no record would exist.

Be all this as it may, so far as the writer can ascertain, there has never been but this one John Gosmer in America; and there can be no reasonable doubt that it was the ex-Mayor of Fordwich who is next on record<sup>10</sup> at Lynn, Massachusetts, where already, on March 10th, 1639, the founding of Southampton, L. I., had been formally "undertaken." By the mutilated declaration of the Company we know that on the 4th day of the 4th—16—(probably June 4th, 1640), "Mr. John Gosmere" was "admitted an undertaker." At Southampton, on December 16th, 1640, the name of "Mr. John Gosmer" headed the list of the parties of the second part to the "Indian Deed" for the land lying eastward "between the foresaid bounds by water" from the place "where the Indians hayle their cannoes out of the North Bay to the southside of the Island," later known as Canoe Place<sup>10</sup>.

On March 7th, 1644, it was ordered that "yf by the providence of God there shall be henceforth within the bounds of this plantacon any whale or whales cast up"

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<sup>9</sup> Hotten's Lists of Emigrants, 1600-1700.

<sup>10</sup> S. T. R.

certain designated townsmen should attend to their "cutting out." In this; in dealing with the Shinnecoeks, Montauks and other tribes; in dividing the lands among the townsmen; in fencing out the wilderness; in clearing off the forests; and in all the varied tasks of a new settlement, the town records show that "John Gosmer, Gentleman," took a leading part. For the enforcement of law and order, magistrates (generally three in number) were elected by the General Court (town meeting) "who were looked upon with a degree of veneration that the modern occupants of the office can hardly hope to obtain";<sup>10</sup> in 1644 he was already a magistrate. When in 1647, Southampton entered into a compact with Connecticut, Mr. Edward Howell and he were the first to represent the town in the House of Magistrates in the General Court at Hartford; and he continued to serve until 1650.<sup>11</sup>

Then, in the midst of his prosperity, a lifelong grief came to him in the death of his only son Richard; whose estate he administered in the year 1650.<sup>10</sup> As on March 7th, 1644, the son had been appointed to the whaling squadron<sup>10</sup>, his presumable age at that time indicates that he was born in England; and as he was appointed from the 3d Ward, while his father was appointed from the 2d Ward, he presumably had a house of his own. Notwithstanding this, Howell says that he appears to have died unmarried; and, whether married or not, that his father adopted a son, and that the name of Gosmer dropped out of the record after the death of the survivor, must seem sufficient evidence that he died without leaving male issue

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<sup>11</sup> Howell. *Hinman's Puritan Settlers; Colonial Records of Conn.*, 1636-1665. *Plymouth Colony Records*, IX, 143, 167. *Savage's Genealogical Dictionary*.

In 1652 Mr. Gosmer was the *Primus* of the three South-ampton magistrates; and he was re-elected several years in succession.<sup>10</sup> During 1655-1658 he again represented his town at Hartford.<sup>11</sup> When in 1657 there was an Indian alarm, and "for preservation of ye towne" it was voted that all men should "lay downe themselves in respect of their persons & estates, to bee disposed of by the said 7 men in a way of righteousness, to attend any means that may in their Judgement effect the said ends," he was one of the seven.<sup>3 10</sup>

Already, however, he had begun to set his house in order. In 1655 he bought property in Boston, which in 1658 he made over "to his kinswoman, Ann, widow of Richard Carter."<sup>12</sup> In 1657 his step-son John Woodruff succeeded him in the whaling squadron. It is probably in the same year that this John Woodruff, Sr., received from him the "messuage or tenement over against the said Mr. Gosmer his home lot, which said tenement he bought of John Topping" (in 1657), and "five acres of land"; though the deed was not recorded until February 20, 1660-1. On July 29, 1659, he deeded to his "adopted sonne, who hath lived with me from a child, all my goods and chattells, house and lands"; to which Elizabeth his wife consented.<sup>10</sup> No other will has been found.

Then (after the entry of February 20th, 1660-61), he

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<sup>12</sup> Savage's Genealogical Dictionary.

It is possible that this Ann, widow of Richard Carter, was the Ann Woodruff, widow, who in 1618 married John Gosmer, bachelor (page 9); who, because the surname was very rare thereabouts, may be believed to have been a son of Mr. Gosmer by a first wife. Widowed a second time, Ann may have married Richard Carter. A third time widowed, it would have been natural for Mr. Gosmer to have provided something out of his wealth for a "kinswoman" who was the widow of his first born son; and natural for him, when made childless by the death of Richard, to have chosen the name of the dead first-born for his adopted son John.

was lost from the town records that had so often shown him a masterful man of affairs, upright, able, energetic, wealthy, dignified, perhaps just a little bit dictatorial. In his "Puritan Settlers" Hinman has written: "an examination of the Colony records of Connecticut shows that Hon. John Gosmer, Mr. Edward Howell, Mr. John Ogden, Mr. Young, Captain Thomas Toppin, Thomas Baker and Robert Bond, were the leading men in the eastern half of Long Island in its early settlement." Doubtless John Gosmer lies with his fellow pioneers in the old South End burying ground at Southampton; but their tombstones have crumbled into dust,<sup>3</sup> and, less fortunate than others, he has left no descendants of his name to remind men of a most worthy life. It rests with the descendants of his step son to keep his memory green.





## II JOHN WOODRUFF, THE IMMIGRANT.







## II JOHN WOODRUFF, THE IMMIGRANT.

In the year 1508,<sup>13</sup> just at the end of the reign of King Henry the Seventh, Thomas Woodrove<sup>14</sup> was the first of his name to appear in the records of the town of Fordwich (4). He was the "trusted envoy of the town" on journeys that were hazardous in those days of Henry the Eighth. In 1538, St. Augustine, "the great monastery without the walls of Canterbury, shared the fate of other like foundations, and its estates were given over to the rapacity of the King and his courtiers; and in the following year, Thomas Woderofe, who was now a Jurat,<sup>15</sup> sat with his brother magistrates in their court at Fordwich, to arrange for the conveyancing to some favored individuals of a portion of the possessions of the dispoiled house." He died in 1552.

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13 What follows has been taken from the very interesting "Memorials of the Family of Woodruff" (5). If the author would re-print and publish these Memorials he would confer a great boon on all readers. The brief sketches here given should be considered a mere stop-gap.

14 Woodreeve. In the Saxon period in England a reeve "represented the lord of a district, whether township or hundred, at the folk-mote (meeting or assembly) of the county; and within his district he levied his lord's dues, and performed some of his judicial functions" (Chamber's Encyclopædia). A "wood-reeve" was presumably reeve for his lord's woodlands. Sometimes written, Woodreefe, Woodrove, Woodroffe, Woodroufe, Woderofe, Woodrofe, Woodrufe, Woodruffe, Woodruff, Woodrow, Woodrop.

15 The only existing Jurats (Channel Islands) are "judges and legislators appointed for life" (Century Dictionary). In Fordwich the Jurat seems to have been Magistrate and Municipal Councillor in one.

His son William Woodroffe, is recorded as a Jurat of Fordwich in 1579; perhaps the senior Jurat, as from his generally signing the minutes of the Borough Court he was apparently acting for the Mayor in the latter's absence. He was also a "Key Keeper of the Town Chest; a very honorable office conferred upon the two best men of the Liberty" (Borough). He died in 1587.

His eldest son, Robert Woodroffe of Fordwich, in 1573 married Alice Russel at St. Mary Northgate<sup>6</sup>. Both he and a brother William, about the year 1580, figure in the Town Books as freemen (entitled to privileges of Borough). William's family became extinct at Fordwich in 1673. Robert is on record as a Jurat, and a Churchwarden (1584); and died in 1611.

His eldest son, John Woodroffe, was born at Fordwich in 1574. On "reaching man's estate he took up his residence in Northgate, where his uncle William Russell was Churchwarden"; in 1601 he married Elizabeth Cartwright; and he died at the early age of thirty-nine. His will "would not lead us to suppose that any increase to his fortune had resulted from his removal to Northgate." In it, "delivered this (*sic*) of September, 1611," when he was "very sick in bodye", and proved in October, 1611, he, "John Woodruffe", "husbandman" (head of a household), bade that he "be buried at the direction of my well beloved wyffe"; named minor legacies to his young, and only, son John, and others; and left all the rest of his "goods and chattills" to his wife Elizabeth. The widow married Mr. John Gosmer<sup>7</sup>.

This thorough search through the records, by the Rev. C. Eveleigh Woodruff, shows that so far back as 1508 our ancestors were freemen of Fordwich, and men of standing

in the community. Apparently they were yeomen<sup>16</sup> of, to judge from the surname, Saxon blood. Some day, perhaps, by searching family histories and other records, some one may find a "Thomas Woodrove" (not otherwise disposed of) who fits the dates and circumstances; and so will re-attach us to the parent stock.

As, notwithstanding Mr. Woodruff's most careful search of the records, but one adult John Woodruff could be found throughout the three parishes<sup>6</sup> between the years 1625 and 1640, the John Woodroufe baptized at St. Mary Northgate in 1604 was beyond reasonable doubt the "only son" named in the will of John Woodroffe of 1574-1611; and, therefore, after the re-marriage of his mother Elizabeth, the step-son of Mr. John Gosmer. He married Anne \_\_\_\_\_, possibly, as has been suggested, a daughter of his step-father by a first wife<sup>17</sup>; but it is more probable that when, in 1665, their son John spoke<sup>18</sup> of Mr. Gosmer as his "grandfather" it was not because of his mother's parentage but because through his father he was a step-grandson<sup>2</sup>. It can evidently only have been this one adult John Woodruff who is on record in 1636 as a Churchwarden at Fordwich; and the baby John Woodruff who was baptized in 1637 in the parish of Sturry was presumably his eldest son John.

Thompson<sup>19</sup>, on page 207, named among the settlers

<sup>16</sup> The Century Dictionary defines "yeoman" as, in recent English use, one owning (and usually himself cultivating) a small landed property; a free-holder. "There came a country gentleman (a sufficient yeoman) to town" (Aubrey. Lives. Walter Raleigh).

<sup>17</sup> See page 9.

<sup>18</sup> S. T. R. II, page 49.

<sup>19</sup> Thompson's "Hist. of Long Island;" dedicated to the Honorable Silas Wood. For the above facts stated by Thompson, Savage (Gen. Dict.) refers us to "Wood's History;" in which no mention of the name of "Woodruff" has been found.

who arrived at Southampton, Long Island, during the first twelve months a "John Gosman" (written "John Gosmer" on page 208), and a "John Woodruff"; while the pages of the Southampton Town Records show that this only one adult John Woodruff at that period in Southampton was a member of the Gosmer household. There can therefore be no reasonable doubt that the John Woodruff born in 1604 accompanied his mother and step-father on their journey to Lynn and Southampton in 1639 or 1640; and so became the immigrant ancestor of the New Jersey Woodruffs<sup>20</sup>. With him no doubt came his wife Anne, and the baby John; destined to later become one of the founders of Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, so that the baby's descendants enjoy the distinction of having two immigrant ancestors<sup>21</sup>.

For years after the founding of Southampton, although the land was "honorably purchased of its original owners, yet the settlers never saw a moment's rest for fear of their dreaded neighbors. In the field a guard was kept; at night none knew at what hour the alarm would sound; to meeting on the Lord's day, they went as men prepared for instant war; every male from 16 years of age to 60 was enrolled in the ranks"<sup>22</sup>. Under such circumstances it might be expected that the step-son and his wife would

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20 See page 10. Genealogists have been unable to establish any connection between him and Matthew Woodruff of Farmington, ancestor of New England family; although both were first on record in America in the same year, 1640.

21 Possibly of the party were also Richard and Ann Carter (See page 12. Note.), who were first on record at Boston on July 2d, 1639 (Drake's Hist. of Antiquities of Boston, page 245). This date may throw light on the time of the arrival in America of the Gosmers and Woodruffs; but of course the Carters may have led the way.

22 S. T. R.; W. S. P., page III.

live with their parent, both no longer young<sup>23</sup>; and the belief is confirmed by Mr. Gosmer's statement (in the deed that was his will) that their son, John, whom he adopted, "hath lived with me from a child"<sup>24</sup>. In those patriarchal days, even more than now, as a member of Mr. Gosmer's household John Woodruff would not have been considered one of the "heads of families," and, therefore, would not appear in the List of May, 1649<sup>25</sup>. There seems indeed to have been no opportunity in the town records until on April 30, 1657 (when he was 53 years of age) he is named among the arms-bearing men to whom gunpowder was served out because of an Indian attack on the town<sup>26</sup>.

On September 17th of the same year Mr. Gosmer "bought an hundred pound lot of John Topping with the housing and fences and all his accommodations, with all the privileges there unto belonging in Southampton"<sup>27</sup>, which he handed over to his step-son; possibly to qualify him as his successor in the whaling squadron, which he became the same year<sup>28</sup>. In that year, also (but probably later than the above) John Woodruff is on the list of the representatives of the town houses, while Mr. Gosmer's name is omitted<sup>29</sup>; and he is recorded in the Plan<sup>30</sup> as having, in

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23 The mother Elizabeth was first married in 1601.

24 S. T. R.; II, page 237.

25 Howell, page 31.

26 S. T. R.; I; pages 95, Note, and 155.

27 Ibid: I; page 136. The lot is on the west side of Main street nearly opposite, and south of west from, the Gosmer home lot. The house on it, occupied in 1832 by Mr. Frederic Howell (S. T. R. III. Plan), and now by Mr. William Howell, is the one next south of Enoch's millinery store.

28 Howell, page 184.

29 Ibid, page 32.

30 S. T. R.: III: Plan of Main street, Southampton.

1659, succeeded the latter in the Gosmer homestead. In 1659, also, he is for the first time mentioned as exchanging land<sup>31</sup>. On Feb. 20th, 1660-61 the 1657 gift of house and land to him was registered by Mr. Gosmer<sup>32</sup>; after which the name of Gosmer disappeared from the records. Apparently therefore, John Gosmer, who had retired from active work in 1657, died in 1661; and John Woodruff, then 57 years of age, reigned in his stead. In 1661 and 1662 he was only recorded as a successful plaintiff, as on an important jury, as giving in his "ear-mark"<sup>33</sup>, and as dealing in land<sup>34</sup>. In 1663, at the town meeting of May 1st, when new rules were established regarding the keeping up of fences to prevent the trespassing of "cattell, sheepe, goats and hoggs" that had been breeding quarrels and lawsuits, he was elected and "sworne impounder"<sup>35</sup>.

In 1664 the times suddenly changed. At its foundation a little republic in itself, Southampton soon entered "into combinacon with the Jurisdiction of Connecticote"<sup>36</sup>. The relation continued practically unchanged until on March 12, 1664, Charles II granted Long Island (and other territories) to his brother James, Duke of York; and, against the wish of its people, Suffolk county, with its chief town Southampton, became a part of the Province of New York<sup>37</sup>. In the following year, under the "Duke's Laws", promulgated at the Hempstead convention in March, 1665,

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31 Ibid: I; page 131. A comparison with the original has shown that the "John Woodruff" on page 123 of (the published) Vol. I is a misprint for "John Wendall"; as, indeed, the context indicates.

32 Ibid: II: page 205.

33 Brand to identify domestic animals.

34 S. T. R.: I: pages 149, 150, 151. II: pages 13, 14, 28, 223, 229.

35 Ibid: II: page 222.

36 Howell, page 51.

37 Ibid, page 57.



Suffolk county was made the "East Riding (court district) of Yorkshire"<sup>38</sup>. Townsmen and General Courts (Town Meetings) ceased to exist, and a new tribunal was established called the "Court of the Constable and Overseers". "All the evils anticipated by the people were to be fully realized. All complaints were met in the manner that might be expected from those who considered that they were commissioned by Heaven to rule and that the people were born to obey. Gov. Nicholls was succeeded by Gov. Lovelace, whose character as a ruler may be learned from his remark, that the only way to keep the people quiet was to lay such taxes upon them as should leave no time for thinking of anything else than how to pay them"<sup>39</sup>.

Many good men went into opposition, and perhaps John Woodruff was among them. For, excepting such mention in land matters<sup>40</sup> as would be expected for a large proprietor, he does not appear in the records until the final entry of Feb. 22nd, 1669, when he joined in signing a petition to "our honorable Governor Gen'l. Lovelace" that they might not be deprived of "those our priviledges which at great rate wee have procured with much difficulty and danger wee have soe many years possessed"<sup>41</sup>. Possibly, also, his absence from public life was, at least in part, due to his having grown, older than his years; for on May 4th, 1670, when "weak in Body", he made his will<sup>42</sup>, which was proved on June 1st, 1670; so he died in the 66th year of his age.

In his will he gave unto his "Eldest son John Woodruff

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38 Ibid, page 58. The American "Yorkshire" was made up of Queen's county; King's county, Staten Island, and Newtown; and Suffolk county.

39 S. T. R., II. W. S. P., pages II and III:

40 Ibid, I, pages 150, 151, 152, 175, 179, 180, II, pages 41, 251, 314.

41 Ibid, II: page 350.

42 New York Surrogate's Office, Liber I, folio 69.

of Elizabeth Town, one half crowne piece of money in full of all portions and Patrimony whatsoever, to be expected from mee, or out of any part of my estate"; and to his daughters Anne<sup>43</sup> and Elizabeth<sup>44</sup> each 20£, to be paid after the widow's death. These small legacies usually indicated that the heirs concerned had already received their portions, on their marriage or their going out into the world, but the peculiar and particular wording in the case of the eldest son may perhaps mean that family friction was not entirely avoided when the younger brother was adopted as son, and made heir, by the step-grandfather. The testator further made the "wife Anne Woodruff and my youngest son John Woodruff joynt Executors"; and left "all the rest of my Estate both land and chattels and goods and household stuffe to be to ye only proper behoofe and benefitt of my said Execs." By the Inventory attached to the will we further know that there had already been "one half of ye Land Howsings and Accommodations clearly by Deed of Gift disposed of to his son John;" obviously the youngest son. (Search has failed to find the Deed).

This Inventory, when compared with others of the place and period, shows that, for his times, John Woodruff was a man of wealth and refinement; and a study of the other too scanty information within reach has given the impression that had he less unselfishly sacrificed himself to the interests of his parents, his family, and his town, the man who was Churchwarden at 32 would have taken up more room in the records, The little there is, how-

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<sup>43</sup> Anne married Robert Woolley; see Howell, page 408, and S. T. R., II, page 315.

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth married ————— Dayton; probably Robert, son of Ralph, See Howell, pages 229, 230.



ever, is to his honor ; and from the requirements of the at that time important and difficult post of "impounder," to which he was elected, it may be inferred that he was upright, of tact and sound judgment, and, generally, of a character and standing that commanded the confidence and respect of all both high and low in the community. Doubtless he too, like John Gosmer<sup>45</sup>, lies with the other founders of Southampton in the old South End burying ground, and his tombstone, also, has crumbled into dust ; but, more fortunate than his step-father, there are ever-increasing generations of direct descendants to keep his name before the eyes of men.

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<sup>45</sup> See page 13.





THE TWO SONS JOHN.





## THE TWO SONS JOHN.

Of the two sons named John by our ancestor John Woodruff, the Immigrant <sup>46</sup>, the elder was baptized in 1637 in the parish of Sturry<sup>6</sup>, in Kent, England. He doubtless accompanied his parents and grand parents<sup>47</sup> on the journey from Fordwich to Southampton, Long Island, in 1639 or 1640, but does not appear in the records of the latter town until April 30, 1657, when he (then twenty years of age) was included in a list of arms-bearing men<sup>48</sup>.

He was first mentioned as a landowner on February 20, 1659-60; and about the same time he married a daughter of Mr. John Ogden of Southampton. His father-in-law added to his land and later, in 1664, gave him the "house and home lot" on Main street Mr. Ogden had bought from his nephew (or cousin) John Ogden on the latter's departure from Southampton<sup>49</sup>. On January 4, 1660-61 "John Woodruff, Jun. his daughter Sarah was borne"<sup>50</sup>. He was joint plaintiff with Mr. Ogden in an action of trespass of Sept. 3, 1661, in which the parties came to an agreement. There were dealings in land; and at a town meeting on May 1, 1663, he was elected a "Cunstable"<sup>51</sup>. In the

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<sup>46</sup> See page 17.

<sup>47</sup> Pages 10, 20.

<sup>48</sup> S. T. R. I., pp. 154, 155.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid II., pp. 208, 229, 236. The site of the house is now occupied by the residence of Mr. Albert J. Post (Clerk of the Town Trustees), on the east side of Main street, three doors north of the "Hampton Road" to Bridgehampton, Easthampton, &c.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid II., 218.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid II., pp. 8, 223, 225 ("1653" is "1663" in the original record) and 229. The office of constable even at that time conferred honor on its occupant, but it was not until 1665 that it was greatly increased in power and dignity by the establishment of "The Court of the Constable and Overseers." S. T. R. II. W. S. P., p. 2.

burning question of the Topping Purchase he testified, on Feb. 2, 1663-64, that he was present "When Wayacombone delivered unto Mr. John Ogden quite seizen and possession of all ye lands" Mr. Ogden had sold to the town of Southampton, but Captain Topping claimed; the Court decided against the latter<sup>52</sup>.

It was in 1664 that the bitter discontent began because King Charles had granted Long Island (and other territories) to his brother James, Duke of York and Albany.

In addition, after John Woodruff, sen., died his younger brother would have possession of the homestead that ordinarily would have belonged to himself as head of the family; and it is possible, also, that death in his own household further made longer residence in Southampton distasteful to the elder son. So it was but natural he should join his father-in-law, Mr. Ogden, in the emigration to New Jersey. Between August 29 and September 7, 1665, he recorded the sales of his house to Robert Woolley the husband of his sister Anne<sup>53</sup>, and of his land to other fellow townsmen. On the latter date "Sarah Woodruff ye wife of John Woodruff, Jr., of Southampton" confirmed the above sales<sup>54</sup>. How John Woodruff, Jr., could have had a daughter "Sarah" borne in 1661, and a wife "Sarah" living on September 7, 1665, and yet in February 7, 1666, or even two or three months earlier, have ar-

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid I., p. 177.

<sup>53</sup> page 24.

<sup>54</sup> S. T. R. II, pp. 48, 49, and 236. From a study of the original full text it seems apparent that the exchanges (not sales) of land also registered on these dates, while one or two might have been for the younger brother of the same name, were in the main only the putting on record by the emigrant of previous transactions in order to give a good title. In 1679, when living in E town he for this purpose confirmed a former sale of land to William Ludlow that seems to have been overlooked at his departure from Southampton. So. Book C. of Deeds. folio 331.

rived in Elizabeth Town, as Dr. Hatfield doubtless correctly states<sup>55</sup>, with no children and a wife "Mary," evidently needs explanation<sup>56</sup>.

At Elizabethtown, on the 27 April, 1691, when only fifty-four years old but "in hazard of life," he made his will<sup>57</sup> and on May 25 it was proved. His bold signature to the original will at Trenton (Old Essex Wills) is character-revealing! Dr. Hatfield (*passim*) has told us much, but not enough, of his gallant career as Ensign, High Sheriff, Magistrate, and a leading citizen who stood up bravely against the arbitrary course of the Proprietors. It is earnestly to be hoped that his descendants<sup>58</sup> will tell us the story of his life with the fulness that is so evidently his due.

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From the dates there can be no doubt that John Woodruff, Jun., the second son, was born in Southampton, but the year of his birth is unknown<sup>59</sup>; for genealogical purposes, however, it may be put down at about 1650<sup>60</sup>. On

<sup>55</sup> Hatfield, p. 105.

<sup>56</sup> The daughter Sarah might have died; and the unmistakable "Sarah" in the original record of September 7th may have been incorrectly copied from a less legible "Mary" in the deed; it is less probable that he re-married in so brief a time.

<sup>57</sup> Trenton. Liber D of Deeds, folio 283,

<sup>58</sup> The writer is of the Westfield branch of the New Jersey Woodruffs, descended from the Immigrant through his younger son John, and his son Joseph: as distinguished from the E. town branch, descended through the elder son John he is now writing about.

<sup>59</sup> His tombstone, that might tell us, with little doubt lies buried under the turf of the old South End burying ground. Effort is now being made to ascertain if any of the buried stones of that generation and later can be found.

<sup>60</sup> The giving of the name "John" to a younger brother while an elder brother also named "John" was still living in the same household is so unusual it is only reasonable to believe it was not done until the death in 1649-50 of the step-grandfather's only son, Richard Gosmer (Page 11) had become a cause for the adoption and the naming. That the younger

July 29, 1659, there is the following record; "Be it known unto all that are present and to come that I, John Gosmer of Southampton upon Long Island in America (Gentleman), have given and granted and by this my present Deed have confirmed to my adopted sone John Woodruff whoe hath lived with me from a child, All my goods and chattells, howses and lands with all the appurtenances, thereunto belonging, and all privileges pertaining thereunto; To have and to hold and to enjoy the above mentioned gifts as his owne forever. Also Elizabeth the wife of ye said John Gosmer (gent.) hath consented and confirmed all the above mentioned gifts in witness whereof they have boath of them hereunto set to their hands and seals this Day of July 29; 5; in the year of ye nativity of our Lord Christ one thousand six hundred fifty-nine."<sup>61</sup> This adopted son was presumably the younger brother<sup>62</sup>.

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brother was not included in the arms-bearing list of 1657 is evidence that at least he was then not 16 years old (S. T. R., pp. 154-155.) The second of his sons still living when he made his will, on Jan. 14, 1701, was not born until 1676 (N. J. Hist. Society's Proceedings III, Vol. II, No. 2, page 116); and the will shows that of his children then surviving seven, including all the daughters, were not yet 21 years old. He is therefore, not likely to have married before 1670, perhaps not until after the death of his father in that year; and if after the fashion of the times he married at twenty or thereabouts, he would have been born about 1650.

61 S. T. R. Orig. Liber A, No. 1, p. 57.

62 The use of the word "confirmed" clearly indicates that the deed merely put on record a previous family agreement. The only argument known to the writer against the contention that this former family agreement referred to the younger son is the following: On Dec. 18, 1665 Isaac Halsey, in the right of John Woodruff, Jun., as a Proprietor, claimed a three hundred pound lot (see page 34), and John Woodruff: Sen., a 150 pound lot, of Quagnanantuck (Quagna, Quogue) land: and on January 19, 1666, they were charged for the lots drawn (S. T. R. I, p. 151. II p. 250). When parting with this land in 1672 Mr. Halsey stated (Suffolk Co. Clerk's Office, Small Book of Deeds, p. 46) that he had purchased it from "John Woodruff, Jr., the adopted sone of John Gosmer, Gent", and that this was recorded in a deed (that has not been found) of Sept. 7, 1665; that is, of the very date on which the elder



His first appearance by his own act in the town records was in June, 1666, when he (then probably about sixteen years of age) gave in as his earmark (brand for cattle, &c.,) "a half-penny under the left ear"<sup>62</sup>. It was perhaps not until 1670, or later, that he married Hannah Newton<sup>63</sup>. In 1675 he joined in the town agreement to set apart a house and land to "Bee and remain from time to time and forever to the use of ye ministry of our said towne, as the providence of God shall hereafter dispose ministers of the word successively unto us"<sup>64</sup>. On October 26th, 1683, he again recorded his earmark, this time when giving in one for "his son John Woodruff, Jun." which was to be "two half-pennys under the left ear which earmark was his grandmother Woodruff's and is

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son was selling all his property prior to his emigration to New Jersey. As, however, Proprietors' rights could only be obtained either by inheritance or by purchase (see page 34), and as it is very improbable that either of the two sons had earned money enough to buy rights that would have entitled him to claim a 300 pound lot (the largest amount claimed, by any, and by only four of the Proprietors: and double that claimed by their father) it is reasonable to believe that the 300 pound claim was inherited from Mr. Gosmer. Now we know that, while the parents occupied the homestead after Mr. Gosmer's death and presumably had a life interest, it was the younger son who after their death possessed the homestead and who willed it, and Mr. Gosmer's other property, to his heirs. Notwithstanding any coincidence of dates, therefore, this seems to prove beyond question that it was he, and not the elder brother, who was the 'adopted sone.'

62 S. T. R. I. 149. As his father's earmark was "two half-pennys under the left ear" the "one half-penny" had probably been previously used by the elder brother, and abandoned to the younger brother on the former's emigration.

63 Benoni Newton in a deed of 1682 (So. Red Book of Deeds, folios 77-78) described John Woodruff as his "brother"; as he had not married either of John's two sisters, (page 24), "brother" doubtless meant "brother-in-law" (2) through his own sister. Mr. Newton was a Town Trustee in 1693 (S. T. R. II, 128). "Trustees" were first established by Dongan's Patent, December 6, 1686, (S. T. R. I. Appendix: but omitted in some copies).

64 S. T. R., II, page 63.

by her made over to the said John Woodruff, Jun.,"<sup>65</sup>. In the same year he was included, for purposes of taxation, in "The Estimate of the Town of Southampton for the year 1683"<sup>66</sup>. He was a subscriber in 1694 for two of schoolmaster Mr. Mowbrey's "schollers"<sup>67</sup>; and in 1696 he was among the inhabitants of the town assessed for a contribution to the "defence of the fronteer"<sup>68</sup>. From 1673 to 1698 there are numerous items<sup>69</sup>, besides those already mentioned, regarding the division, dealing in, and management of land.

By the Lynn agreement of 1639<sup>70</sup> Southampton land was owned by the Proprietors as tenants in common, until it was from time to time divided by the drawing of lots; the shares being proportioned to the amount of money each had contributed to the "undertaking". To provide a convenient unit the town in 1648 adopted one-fourtieth of £6,000, 150 pounds, as a "lot"; to be subdivided into three fifties<sup>71</sup>. Shares passed by inheritance, and could be purchased; the undivided land was called "commonage". As the divisions were made at different times in separate localities, and as in each division each proprietor was entitled to his share of homestead, meadow, upland, arable,

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65 Ibid II, p. 275. Orig. Liber A II. Folio 101. This John was apparently a first-born son who was not named in his father's will of 1701. because he had died prior to Jan. 8, 1693-4; on which date "John Woodruff records earmark yt was formerly recorded to his son John Woodruff to Samuel Woodruff his son being two half pennys under the left ear" (Ibid, Folio 165). In the will, Samuel is named as the "eldest son."

66 Howell, page 44, refers to Doc. Hist. of N. Y., Vol. 2, page 536.

67 S. T. R., II., pp. 360-361.

68 Ibid, II, pp. 361-362.

69 Ibid, II, pp. 76, 78, 84, 87, 88, 92, 100, 101, 119, 120, 123, 254, 258, 259, 263, 264, 278, 303, 307, 312, 317, 319, 328, 332; So. Liber C of Deeds, folio 37½ So. Red Book of Deeds, folios 338-364.

70 Ibid, I., pp. 2 to 6.

71 Ibid, I., p. 50. Note W. S. P.

and wood lands, their holdings were necessarily widely dispersed, and there were naturally very many exchanges between individuals to make their farms better suited to their purposes<sup>72</sup>. Hence it came about that the "swapping of land" seems to have taken the place of the "swapping of horses" elsewhere; and John Woodruff evidently did his share<sup>69</sup>.

His share ended when on Jan. 14, 1701, he "in health of body" made his will<sup>73</sup> and on April 1st, 1703, it was proved. Between the death of his father in 1670 and his own death in 1703 Southampton had passed through many vicissitudes. In July, 1673, New York was captured by the Dutch. In a manly petition, of Aug. 14, the "Inhabitants of the East Riding of Long Island (namely, Southampton, Easthampton, South Hoold, Seataukok, and Huntington)" surrendered under duress: but, with some aid from Connecticut and one "spirited engagement", they successfully resisted the taking of an oath of allegiance until, on Nov. 10, 1674, Governor Andross replaced the Dutch. Instead of rewarding the East Riding for its brave loyalty the Governor promptly forced the inhabitants to take out, and pay for, new patents for land that was already indisputably their own. The later change of their lord's title from Duke of York to James II only increased the power to oppress, until the revolution of 1686 brought relief<sup>74</sup>.

No doubt John Woodruff did his duty as a good citizen, but the records do not show that he took a prominent part in public affairs. Born with the silver spoon in the mouth

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, *Passim*, Howell, pp. 26 and 27.

<sup>73</sup> E. L. I. W., p. 261.

<sup>74</sup> Howell, pp. 60-67- S. T. R. II. W. S. P. pp. IV and V.

that deprives of one incentive to exertion; although soon surpassed in wealth by many in the growing community, yet still the possessor (as his will shows) of broad and scattered acres, now unhappily subjected to grinding taxation and extortion; and with ten children to bring up; he was perhaps one of those upon whom Gov. Lovelace, and his successors, had laid such taxes as to "leave no time for thinking of anything else than how to pay them"<sup>75</sup>; and was what we would now-a-days call "land poor."

In his will<sup>76</sup> he bequeathed his possessions to his wife Hannah; his sons Samuel, Joseph, Benjamin, Nathaniel, Isaac and Jonathan; and his daughters Sarah (Davis), Hannah, Abigail and Elizabeth; of whom when his will was drawn in 1701, all from Nathaniel down were not yet twenty-one years old. To his second surviving son, Joseph, who had emigrated to New Jersey in 1699<sup>77</sup>, and had therefore probably already received a portion in money, he left twenty pounds and a remote reversionary interest in lands willed to the younger brothers. To the daughters he gave ten pounds each on their coming of age; Sarah no doubt having had a portion on her marriage, and the others to be similarly cared for by his heirs. To his wife and his other sons he bequeathed all his houses and lands, including commonage<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. iii.

<sup>76</sup> E. L. I. W., p. 261.

<sup>77</sup> Proceedings Vol. II, No. 2, p. 117. He was the progenitor of the Westfield branch of the New Jersey Woodruffs. See Note 58,

<sup>78</sup> His lands were situated as follows: Adjoining a pond called Scuttle Hole (about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles northwesterly from Bridge Hampton): by Long Pond, a string of ponds extending southerly from the above to a point on the "Hampton Road" just west of Bridge Hampton; and Brushey Neck, a part of Hog Neck lying just west of Sag Harbor's Main street (S. T. R. II, 90, Note, and 92). The neck is now owned and occupied by Dr. Morton. There was another "Brushey Neck" west of

The home lot was on the east side of Main street (Southampton), next south of the lot cornering on the "Hampton Road" to Bridgehampton, Easthampton, &c.,<sup>79</sup>; its "three acres" of 1648<sup>80</sup> having been later extended eastward "as much as may be," to be made up for by surrendering land elsewhere<sup>81</sup>. The site of the Gosmer-Woodruff homestead is now occupied by the house of Mr. Josiah Foster. After the original building had in 1703 come into the hands of John's son Samuel, it was rebuilt and remodeled to some extent<sup>82</sup>; and as thus altered is shown in Vol. I, of Southampton Town Records (frontispiece) and in Mr. Howell's History (opposite page 148). On April 12, 1728, Samuel Woodruff and Sarah his wife deeded<sup>83</sup> this property, that had been 80 years in the Gosmer and Woodruff families, to Mr. Francis Pelletreau. The house, which was of some consequence for the time and place, was still standing until within a few years. It was the last in Long Island that retained the old-fashioned rhomboidal window-panes, once in general use, and was for this reason known as "The House of the Diamond Windows"<sup>84</sup>.

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Westhampton (S. T. R. III, p. 143). He had lands also adjoining the west side of the Town Pond (Lake Agawam; the Indian name of Southampton); continuing westward, in Captain's and Halsey's Necks of the Great Plain, and at Shinnecock; northward also at Sebonnucke (Seponnucke, Sebonic, Sebonac), just north of the Golf Grounds. The farm is now in the possession of Captain White. Going westward past Canoe Place, he owned on the Aquebauge (or Accabog) meadows, along the South shore of Great Peconic Bay, south of east from Riverhead. He had previously disposed, by exchange or sale, of other lands at Quogue; at Catchaponak (just west of Quogue meadows); at Sagaponack (Sagg, two or three miles southeast of Bridge Hampton); and of a part of his home lot.

79 S. T. R. III. Plan of Main street, Southampton.

80 Howell, p. 26.

81 S. T. R. I. pp. 150-151.

82 Letter from Mr. W. S. Pelletreau of Oct. 19, 1900.

83 So. Liber C of Deeds, folio 827.

84 E. L. I. W., p. 261.

Samuel Woodruff was on record in Southampton as dealing in land on April 16, 1733, and April 8, 1738<sup>85</sup>, when he was probably sixty-four years of age; and then passed from view. His brothers presumably scattered to the farms that had been bequeathed them near the town, as there are tombstones of their descendants in the Bridge Hampton (both old and new), Scuttle Hole, and Shelter Island burying-grounds, and perhaps elsewhere; but no graves have been found of John Woodruff's own sons and daughters. Doubtless the tombstones still exist, but possibly hidden from view beneath the soil<sup>86</sup>. There are occasional records, none indicating residence in Southampton<sup>87</sup>, down to modern times; but few of the blood, and still fewer of the name of Woodruff now remain in eastern Long Island. In New Jersey, however, they abound.

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85 So. Red Book of Deeds, folio 908. S. T. R. III, p. 8.

86 Formerly, many families living outside the villages buried their dead on their own farms, or with their neighbors in a nearby plot. If the land was kept in the family the graves have been preserved, but in changed hands there might be no one to care for them; and existing tombstones illustrate all the steps of the change from an upright position until only a scrap is still left bare by the ever encroaching sod. In addition, as for example at Scuttle Hole, in some instances the entire space is fast being covered by undergrowth, and at the present pace before very many years have passed even the memory that it was a burying ground may be obliterated from the minds of all but a few genealogists.

87 The census of 1776 (S. T. R. III, Appendix), shows that at that time John, Daniel, David, David Jr., Silas and Benjamin Woodruff were heads of families numbering 26 souls in all. From the order of the list they were living (apparently not very far apart) to the eastward of Water Mill. There is no evidence that any were living in Southampton or anywhere to the west of Water Mill.



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